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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY,
APRIL 1, 2003

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for April 1, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

2. Radikal/Cumhuriyet: In northern Iraq, where 1,200 US soldiers are already deployed, intensive bombing took place around oil centers such as Mosul and Kirkuk, and the Iraqi forces withdrew further south. KDP and PUK affiliated peshmergas also intensified their attacks against Iraqi forces stationed west of the Zab River. Iraqi forces have been withdrawing to defend the cities. KDP's spokesman, Hasyar Zebari, announced that they were expecting thousands of US soldiers in northern Iraq in a very short time. The US envoy to Iraq, Zalmay Halilzad, told the New York Times that the US had not yet reached an agreement with Turkey about the establishment of a "Coordination Cell" to be set up in Silopi. He added that there was a real lack of confidence between Turks and Kurds.

3. Milliyet/Sabah: Turkey and the US agreed on Turkey's not penetrating into northern Iraq in the absence of solid reasons. The US guaranteed that the Kurds in the region under would act under its control and not enter Kirkuk. Zalmay Halilzad said Turkey's penetration into northern Iraq should not be an objective for Turkey and the US would do its best to allay Turkey's concerns.

4. Bolge/Tercuman: Six young men protesting the war on Iraq chained themselves to the US Embassy's fence in Ankara yesterday morning. The protesters unfurled a banner reading "End the US Murders in the Middle East." Drivers on Ataturk Boulevard who honked as they drove by supported their action. Police cut the chains and the demonstrators were taken to the police station for interrogation.

5. Cumhuriyet: After US experts from Incirlik AB went to a village of Sanliurfa to fetch the fragments of a Tomahawk missile were pelted stones and eggs, US military officials asked Turkish officials to provide security for the shipment of US military equipment and vehicles from Kiziltepe to Iskenderun. In the meantime, it is reported that the US extended its lease concerning Iskenderun Port until April 18.

6. Radikal/Hurriyet: On the grounds of having publicly said the phrase "KADEK Chairman, Mr. Abdullah Ocalan" at DEHAP's convention in Tarsus, DEHAP's Tarsus District Chairman, Alattin Bilgi, was interrogated by police and ordered held by the court on charges of "instigation aiming at disintegration of the indivisible Turkish Republic." Bilgi will be tried at the State Security Court of Adana.

7. Evrensel: A case alleging 175 persons damaged a police APC during the 2002 Newroz festivities in Mersin has come to court. Some 46 defendants and their lawyers attended the hearing, during which they denied the allegations. The lawyers asked for submission of experts' report. The hearing was adjourned to an unspecified date to complete the statements of others involved in the incident.

8. Evrensel: Four of the eight people detained during jandarma raids at houses in Kurtalan

(Siirt) were ordered held on the charges of "assisting and harboring KADEK." The detainees were put in Siirt prison.

9. Evrensel: In Karakocan of Elazig, seven persons accused of playing Kurdish tunes at the "Solidarity Evening with the People of Karakocan" were sentenced to five months of imprisonment for violating two articles of the Political Parties Law. The sentence was converted to a fine of USD 650 per person.

10. Evrensel: The trial of 72 security officials involved in the 1996 Diyarbakir F-Type Prison incident -- which resulted in the death of 10 inmates and injury to 23 others -- started in Diyarbakir. None of the security officials involved in the case attended; only attorneys and families of the victims were present. The court said that the duty rosters obtained from the Provincial Jandarma Command and from the Security Directorate of the persons on duty when the incident broke out differed, and asked for a new duty roster and adjourned the hearing to a later date.

HOLTZ